

Regulation of riding stables
(HB 746 by Patronella/Parmer)

DIGEST: HB 746 would have required riding stable operators to be licensed by the Texas Department of Health. Operating a riding stable without a license would have become a Class B misdemeanor punishable by confinement in jail for up to 180 days, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both. The bill would have required the Texas Board of Health to set standards to ensure the humane care and treatment of horses in riding stables.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

The inhumane treatment of animals in riding stables is not a problem of sufficient statewide magnitude to warrant legislation requiring all riding stables in the state to be licensed, the governor said. Further, the cruelty-to-animals provisions in the Texas Penal Code adequately address the problem of the inhumane treatment of animals.

AUTHOR'S
VIEW:

Rep. David Patronella said there is a perception that abuse of riding-stable horses is largely a problem in urban counties. Whether or not that is true, restricting the bill's application to large counties only would serve no purpose. Stable operators could circumvent the legislation simply by locating their stables across county lines. Rep. Patronella also noted that HB 746 was passed favorably out of the House Agriculture and Livestock committee, which has no urban representation. The bill received no adverse testimony and was passed unanimously by the House.

The intent of HB 746 was to prevent maltreatment of riding stable horses. The Texas cruelty-to-animals laws are not preventative in design. Only after an animal is very sick, generally to the extent that the only thing left to do is to put the animal to sleep, can the cruelty-to-animal laws be used against the animal owners. The governor was apparently ill-advised in vetoing this legislation. Perhaps, Rep. Patronella said, the governor thought the legislation concerned mustangs rather than riding-stable horses.

NOTES: The House Research Organization analysis of HB 746 appeared in the April 28, 1987 Daily Floor Report.